



Rumi

---

Selected  
**Poems**

***Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi (1207-1273)***



## Rumi – *Selected Poems*



*[collected and visually processed by Chaim Frank, 2006]*



## Rumi – Selected Poems

### Be Lost in the Call

Lord, said David, since you do not need us,  
why did you create these two worlds?  
Reality replied: O prisoner of time,  
I was a secret treasure of kindness and generosity,  
and I wished this treasure to be known,  
so I created a mirror: its shining face, the heart;  
its darkened back, the world;  
The back would please you if you've never seen the face.  
Has anyone ever produced a mirror out of mud and straw?  
Yet clean away the mud and straw,  
and a mirror might be revealed.  
Until the juice ferments a while in the cask,  
it isn't wine. If you wish your heart to be bright,  
you must do a little work.  
My King addressed the soul of my flesh:  
You return just as you left.  
Where are the traces of my gifts?  
We know that alchemy transforms copper into gold.  
This Sun doesn't want a crown or robe from God's grace.  
He is a hat to a hundred bald men,  
a covering for ten who were naked.  
Jesus sat humbly on the back of an ass, my child!  
How could a zephyr ride an ass?  
Spirit, find your way, in seeking lowness like a stream.  
Reason, tread the path of selflessness into eternity.  
Remember God so much that you are forgotten.  
Let the caller and the called disappear;  
be lost in the Call.

*„Love is a Stranger“, Kabir Helminski - Threshold Books, 1993*



## **O You Who've Gone On Pilgrimage**

O you who've gone on pilgrimage -  
where are you, where, oh where?  
Here, here is the Beloved!  
Oh come now, come, oh come!  
Your friend, he is your neighbor,  
he is next to your wall -  
You, erring in the desert -  
what air of love is this?  
If you'd see the Beloved's  
form without any form -  
You are the house, the master,  
You are the Kaaba, you! . . .  
Where is a bunch of roses,  
if you would be this garden?  
Where, one soul's pearly essence  
when you're the Sea of God?  
That's true - and yet your troubles  
may turn to treasures rich -  
How sad that you yourself veil  
the treasure that is yours!

*Rumi 'I Am Wind, You are Fire'; Translation by Annemarie Schimmel*



## **Oh, If A Tree Could Wander**

Oh, if a tree could wander  
and move with foot and wings!  
It would not suffer the axe blows  
and not the pain of saws!  
For would the sun not wander

away in every night ?  
How could at every morning  
the world be lighted up?  
And if the ocean's water  
would not rise to the sky,  
How would the plants be quickened  
by streams and gentle rain?  
The drop that left its homeland,  
the sea, and then returned ?  
It found an oyster waiting  
and grew into a pearl.  
Did Yusaf not leave his father,  
in grief and tears and despair?  
Did he not, by such a journey,  
gain kingdom and fortune wide?  
Did not the Prophet travel  
to far Medina, friend?  
And there he found a new kingdom  
and ruled a hundred lands.  
You lack a foot to travel?  
Then journey into yourself!  
And like a mine of rubies  
receive the sunbeams? print!  
Out of yourself ? such a journey  
will lead you to your self,  
It leads to transformation  
of dust into pure gold!

*Look! This is Love - Poems of Rumi, Annemarie Schimmel*



## **Come, Come, Whoever You Are.**

Wonderer, worshipper, lover of leaving.  
It doesn't matter.

Ours is not a caravan of despair.  
Come, even if you have broken your vow  
a thousand times  
Come, yet again, come, come.



## **We Are As The Flute**

We are as the flute, and the music in us is from thee;  
we are as the mountain and the echo in us is from thee.  
We are as pieces of chess engaged in victory and defeat:  
our victory and defeat is from thee, O thou whose qualities are comely!  
Who are we, O Thou soul of our souls,  
that we should remain in being beside thee?  
We and our existences are really non-existence;  
thou art the absolute Being which manifests the perishable.  
We all are lions, but lions on a banner:  
because of the wind they are rushing onward from moment to moment.  
Their onward rush is visible, and the wind is unseen:  
may that which is unseen not fail from us!  
Our wind whereby we are moved and our being are of thy gift;  
our whole existence is from thy bringing into being.

*Masnavi Book I, 599-607*



## **On the Deathbed**

Go, rest your head on a pillow, leave me alone;  
leave me ruined, exhausted from the journey of this night,  
writhing in a wave of passion till the dawn.  
Either stay and be forgiving,  
or, if you like, be cruel and leave.  
Flee from me, away from trouble;



take the path of safety, far from this danger.  
We have crept into this corner of grief,  
turning the water wheel with a flow of tears.  
While a tyrant with a heart of flint slays,  
and no one says, „Prepare to pay the blood money.“  
Faith in the king comes easily in lovely times,  
but be faithful now and endure, pale lover.  
No cure exists for this pain but to die,  
So why should I say, „Cure this pain“?  
In a dream last night I saw  
an ancient one in the garden of love,  
beckoning with his hand, saying, „Come here.“  
On this path, Love is the emerald,  
the beautiful green that wards off dragons-nought, I am losing myself.  
If you are a man of learning,  
read something classic,  
a history of the human struggle  
and don't settle for mediocre verse.

*Kulliyat-i-Shams 2039*



## **This World Which Is Made of Our Love for Emptiness**

Praise to the emptiness that blanks out existence. Existence:  
This place made from our love for that emptiness!  
Yet somehow comes emptiness,  
this existence goes.  
Praise to that happening, over and over!  
For years I pulled my own existence out of emptiness.  
Then one swoop, one swing of the arm,  
that work is over.  
Free of who I was, free of presence, free of dangerous fear, hope,  
free of mountainous wanting.

The here-and-now mountain is a tiny piece of a piece of straw  
blown off into emptiness.

These words I'm saying so much begin to lose meaning:

Existence, emptiness, mountain, straw:

Words and what they try to say swept  
out the window, down the slant of the roof.



„It is said that after Muhammad and the prophets revelation does not descend upon anyone else. Why not? In fact it does, but then it is not called 'revelation.' It is what the Prophet referred to when he said, 'The believer sees with the Light of God.' When the believer looks with 'The believer sees with the Light of God.' When the believer looks with God's Light, he sees all things: the first and the last, the present and the absent. For how can anything be hidden from God's Light? And if something is hidden, then it is not the Light of God. Therefore the meaning of revelation exists, even if it is not called revelation.“

*Fihi ma fihi [Discourses of Rumi] quoted from William C. Chittick, The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi*



## **The Drum Of The Realization**

The drum of the realization of the promise is beating,  
we are sweeping the road to the sky. Your joy is here today, what remains  
for tomorrow?

The armies of the day have chased the army of the night,  
Heaven and earth are filled with purity and light.

Oh! joy for he who has escaped from this world of perfumes and colour!  
For beyond these colours and these perfumes, these are other colours in the  
heart and the soul.

Oh! joy for this soul and this heart who have escaped  
the earth of water and clay,

Although this water and this clay contain the hearth of the philosophical stone.

*(Mystic Odes 473)*



## **Resounds The Call Of Love**

At every instant and from every side, resounds the call of Love:  
We are going to sky, who wants to come with us?  
We have gone to heaven, we have been the friends of the angels,  
And now we will go back there, for there is our country.  
We are higher than heaven, more noble than the angels:  
Why not go beyond them? Our goal is the Supreme Majesty.  
What has the fine pearl to do with the world of dust?  
Why have you come down here?  
Take your baggage back. What is this place?  
Luck is with us, to us is the sacrifice!...  
Like the birds of the sea, men come from the ocean – the ocean of the soul.  
Like the birds of the sea, men come from the ocean – the ocean of the soul.  
How could this bird, born from that sea, make his dwelling here?  
No, we are the pearls from the bosom of the sea, it is there that we dwell:  
Otherwise how could the wave succeed to the wave that comes from the soul?  
The wave named 'Am I not your Lord' has come, it has broken the vessel of the body;  
And when the vessel is broken, the vision comes back, and the union with Him.

*Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch, 'Rumi and Sufism' trans. Simone Fattal, Sausalito, CA: Post-Apollo Press, 1977, 1987.*



## **Our Death is our Wedding**

Our death is our wedding with eternity.  
What is the secret? „God is One.“  
The sunlight splits when entering the windows of the house.  
This multiplicity exists in the cluster of grapes;  
It is not in the juice made from the grapes.  
For he who is living in the Light of God,  
The death of the carnal soul is a blessing.  
Regarding him, say neither bad nor good,  
For he is gone beyond the good and the bad.  
Fix your eyes on God and do not talk about what is invisible,  
So that he may place another look in your eyes.  
It is in the vision of the physical eyes  
That no invisible or secret thing exists.  
But when the eye is turned toward the Light of God  
What thing could remain hidden under such a Light?  
Although all lights emanate from the Divine Light  
Don't call all these lights „the Light of God“;  
It is the eternal light which is the Light of God,  
The ephemeral light is an attribute of the body and the flesh.  
...Oh God who gives the grace of vision!  
The bird of vision is flying towards You with the wings of desire.

*(Mystic Odes 833)*



## **I've Said Before**

I've said before that every craftsman  
searches for what's not there  
to practice his craft.  
A builder looks for the rotten hole  
where the roof caved in. A water-carrier  
picks the empty pot. A carpenter

stops at the house with no door.  
Workers rush toward some hint  
of emptiness, which they then  
start to fill. Their hope, though,  
is for emptiness, so don't think  
you must avoid it. It contains  
what you need!

Dear soul, if you were not friends  
with the vast nothing inside,  
why would you always be casting you net  
into it, and waiting so patiently?  
This invisible ocean has given you such abundance,  
but still you call it „death“,  
that which provides you sustenance and work.  
God has allowed some magical reversal to occur,  
so that you see the scorpion pit  
as an object of desire,  
and all the beautiful expanse around it,  
as dangerous and swarming with snakes.  
This is how strange your fear of death  
and emptiness is, and how perverse  
the attachment to what you want.  
Now that you've heard me  
on your misapprehensions, dear friend,  
listen to Attar's story on the same subject.  
He strung the pearls of this  
about King Mahmud, how among the spoils  
of his Indian campaign there was a Hindu boy,  
whom he adopted as a son. He educated  
and provided royally for the boy  
and later made him vice-regent, seated  
on a gold throne beside himself.  
One day he found the young man weeping..  
„Why are you crying? You're the companion  
of an emperor! The entire nation is ranged out  
before you like stars that you can command!“

The young man replied, „I am remembering  
my mother and father, and how they  
scared me as a child with threats of you!  
'Uh-oh, he's headed for King Mahmud's court!  
Nothing could be more hellish!' Where are they now  
when they should see me sitting here?“  
This incident is about your fear of changing.  
You are the Hindu boy. Mahmud, which means  
Praise to the End, is the spirit's  
poverty or emptiness.  
The mother and father are your attachment  
to beliefs and blood ties  
and desires and comforting habits.  
Don't listen to them!  
They seem to protect  
but they imprison.  
They are your worst enemies.  
They make you afraid  
of living in emptiness.  
Some day you'll weep tears of delight in that court,  
remembering your mistaken parents!  
Know that your body nurtures the spirit,  
helps it grow, and gives it wrong advise.  
The body becomes, eventually, like a vest  
of chain mail in peaceful years,  
too hot in summer and too cold in winter.  
But the body's desires, in another way, are like  
an unpredictable associate, whom you must be  
patient with. And that companion is helpful,  
because patience expands your capacity  
to love and feel peace.  
The patience of a rose close to a thorn  
keeps it fragrant. It's patience that gives milk  
to the male camel still nursing in its third year,  
and patience is what the prophets show to us.  
The beauty of careful sewing on a shirt

is the patience it contains.  
Friendship and loyalty have patience  
as the strength of their connection.  
Feeling lonely and ignoble indicates  
that you haven't been patient.  
Be with those who mix with God  
as honey blends with milk, and say,  
„Anything that comes and goes,  
rises and sets, is not  
what I love.“ else you'll be like a caravan fire left  
to flare itself out alone beside the road.

*Rumi VI (1369-1420) from 'Rumi: One-Handed Basket Weaving*



### **„NO ONE“ says it better:**

What is the *Mi'raj* of the heavens?  
Non-existence.  
The religion and creed of the lovers is non-existence.

*Masnavi VI 233*

*(MI'RAJ according to Islamic tradition is the ascend of Muhammad to heavens from the Al Aksa Mosque in Jerusalem.)*



### **These Spiritual Window-Shoppers**

These spiritual window-shoppers,  
who idly ask, 'How much is that?' Oh, I'm just looking.  
They handle a hundred items and put them down,  
shadows with no capital.  
What is spent is love and two eyes wet with weeping.  
But these walk into a shop,  
and their whole lives pass suddenly in that moment,

in that shop.  
Where did you go? „Nowhere.“  
What did you have to eat? „Nothing much.“  
Even if you don't know what you want,  
buy „something,“ to be part of the exchanging flow.  
Start a huge, foolish project,  
like Noah.  
It makes absolutely no difference  
what people think of you.

*Rumi, 'We Are Three', Mathnawi VI, 831-845*



## **I Died From Minerality**

I died from minerality  
and became vegetable;  
And From vegetativeness  
I died and became animal.  
I died from animality  
and became man.  
Then why fear disappearance through death?  
Next time I shall die  
Bringing forth wings  
and feathers like angels;  
After that, soaring higher than angels -  
What you cannot imagine,  
I shall be that.



## **Soul Receives From Soul**

Soul receives from soul that knowledge,  
therefore not by book



nor from tongue.  
If knowledge of mysteries  
come after emptiness of mind, that is  
illumination of heart.



### **If Thou Wilt Be Observant**

If thou wilt be observant and vigilant,  
thou wilt see at every moment the response to thy action.  
Be observant if thou wouldst have a pure heart,  
for something is born to thee in consequence of every action.



### **Rub Thine Eyes**

I said, 'Thou art harsh, like such a one.'  
'Know,' he replied,  
'That I am harsh for good,  
not from rancour and spite.  
Whoever enters saying,  
„This I,“ I smite him on the brow;  
For this is the shrine of Love,  
o fool! it is not a sheep cote!  
Rub thine eyes,  
and behold the image  
of the heart.'



### **Make yourself free**

Make yourself free from self at one stroke!  
Like a sword be without trace of soft iron;

Like a steel mirror, scour off all rust with contrition.



## **A Star Without a Name**

When a baby is taken from the wet nurse,  
it easily forgets her  
and starts eating solid food.  
Seeds feed awhile on ground,  
then lift up into the sun.  
So you should taste the filtered light  
and work your way toward wisdom  
with no personal covering.  
That's how you came here, like a star  
without a name. Move across the night sky  
with those anonymous lights.

*(Mathnawi III, 1284-1288) - „Say I am You“ Coleman Barks Maypop, 1994*



## **God has given us a dark wine**

God has given us a dark wine so potent that,  
drinking it, we leave the two worlds.  
God has put into the form of hashish a power  
to deliver the taster from self-consciousness.  
God has made sleep so  
that it erases every thought.  
God made Majnun love Layla so much that  
just her dog would cause confusion in him.  
There are thousands of wines  
that can take over our minds.  
Don't think all ecstasies  
are the same!

***Jesus was lost in his love for God.***

His donkey was drunk with barley.

Drink from the presence of saints,

not from those other jars.

Every object, every being,

is a jar full of delight.

Be a connoisseur,

and taste with caution.

Any wine will get you high.

Judge like a king, and choose the purest,

the ones unadulterated with fear,

or some urgency about „what's needed.“

Drink the wine that moves you

as a camel moves when it's been untied,

and is just ambling about.

*Mathnawi IV, 2683-96 - The Essential Rumi, Coleman Barks*



## **Gone to the Unseen**

At last you have departed and gone to the Unseen.

What marvellous route did you take from this world?

Beating your wings and feathers,

you broke free from this cage.

Rising up to the sky

you attained the world of the soul.

You were a prized falcon trapped by an Old Woman.

Then you heard the drummer's call

and flew beyond space and time.

As a lovesick nightingale, you flew among the owls.

Then came the scent of the rosé-garden

and you flew off to meet the Rose.

The wine of this fleeting world

caused your head to ache.

Finally you joined the tavern of Eternity.  
Like an arrow, you sped from the bow  
and went straight for the bull's eye of bliss.  
This phantom world gave you false signs  
But you turned from the illusion  
and journeyed to the land of truth.  
You are now the Sun –  
what need have you for a crown?  
You have vanished from this world -  
what need have you to tie your robe?  
I've heard that you can barely see your soul.  
But why look at all? –  
yours is now the Soul of Souls!  
O heart, what a wonderful bird you are.  
Seeking divine heights,  
Flapping your wings,  
you smashed the pointed spears of your enemy.  
The flowers flee from Autumn, but not you –  
You are the fearless rose  
that grows amidst the freezing wind.  
Pouring down like the rain of heaven  
you fell upon the rooftop of this world.  
Then you ran in every direction  
and escaped through the drain spout ...  
Now the words are over  
and the pain they bring is gone.  
Now you have gone to rest  
in the arms of the Beloved.

*„Rumi - In the Arms of the Beloved“, Jonathan Star, New York 1997*



## **How did you get away?**

How did you get away?

You were the pet falcon of an old woman.  
Did you hear the falcon-drum?  
You were a drunken songbird put in with owls.  
Did you smell the odour of a garden?  
You got tired of sour fermenting  
and left the tavern.  
You went like an arrow to the target  
from the bow of time and place.  
The man who stays at the cemetery pointed the way,  
but you didn't go.  
You became light and gave up wanting to be famous.  
You don't worry about what you're going to eat,  
so why buy an engraved belt?  
I've heard of living at the centre, but what about  
leaving the centre of the centre?  
Flying toward thankfulness, you become  
the rare bird with one wing made of fear,  
and one of hope. In autumn,  
a rose crawling along the ground in the cold wind.  
Rain on the roof runs down and out by the spout  
as fast as it can.  
Talking is pain. Lie down and rest,  
now that you've found a friend to be with.

*„These Branching Moments“, Coleman Barks, Copper Beech Press, 1988*



## **He Comes**

He comes, a moon whose like the sky ne'er saw, awake or dreaming.  
Crowned with eternal flame no flood can lay.  
Lo, from the flagon of thy love, O Lord, my soul is swimming,  
And ruined all my body's house of clay!  
When first the Giver of the grape my lonely heart befriended,  
Wine fired my bosom and my veins filled up;

But when his image all mine eye possessed, a voice descended:  
'Well done, O sovereign Wine and peerless Cup!'  
Love's mighty arm from roof to base each dark abode is hewing,  
Where chinks reluctant catch a golden ray.  
My heart, when Love's sea of a sudden burst into its viewing,  
Leaped headlong in, with 'Find me now who may!'  
As, the sun moving, clouds behind him run,  
All hearts attend thee, O Tabriz's Sun!

*R. A. Nicholson - 'Persian Poems', an Anthology of Verse Translations; edited by A.J. Arberry, Everyman's Library, 1972*



## **Poor Copies Out Of Heaven's Originals**

Poor copies out of heaven's originals,  
Pale earthly pictures mouldering to decay,  
What care although your beauties break and fall,  
When that which gave them life endures for aye?  
Oh never vex thine heart with idle woes:  
All high discourse enchanting the rapt ear,  
All gilded landscapes and brave glistening shows  
Fade-perish, but it is not as we fear.  
Whilst far away the living fountains ply,  
each petty brook goes brimful to the main  
Since baron nor fountain can for ever die,  
Thy fears how foolish, thy lament how vain!  
What is this fountain, wouldst thou rightly know?  
The Soul whence issue all created things.  
Doubtless the rivers shall not cease to flow,  
Till silenced are the everlasting springs.  
Farewell to sorrow, and with quiet mind  
Drink long and deep: let others fondly deem  
The channel empty they perchance may find,  
Or fathom that unfathomable stream.

The moment thou to this low world wast given,  
A ladder stood whereby thou might'st aspire;  
And first thy steps, which upward still have striven,  
From mineral mounted to the plant; then higher  
To animal existence; next, the Man,  
With knowledge, reason, faith. Oh wondrous goal!  
This body, which a crumb of dust began-  
How fairly fashioned the consummate whole!  
Yet stay not here thy journey: thou shalt grow  
An angel bright and home far off in heaven.  
Plod on, plunge last in the great Sea, that so  
Thy little drop make oceans seven times seven.  
'The Son of God!' Nay, leave that word unsaid,  
Say: 'God is One, the pure, the single Truth.'  
What though thy frame be withered, old, and dead,  
If the soul keep her fresh immortal youth?

*R. A. Nicholson - 'Persian Poems', an Anthology of Verse Translations; edited by A.J. Arberry,  
Everyman's Library, 1972*



## **DEPARTURE**

Up, O ye lovers, and away! 'Tis time to leave the world for aye.  
Hark, loud and clear from heaven the from of parting calls-let none delay!  
The cameleer hat risen a main, made ready all the camel-train,  
And quittance now desires to gain: why sleep ye, travellers, I pray?  
Behind us and before there swells the din of parting and of bells;  
To scoreless space each moment sails a disembodied spirit away.  
From yonder starry lights, and through those curtain-awnings darkly blue,  
Mysterious figures float in view, all strange and secret things display.  
From this orb, wheeling round its pole, a wondrous slumber o'er thee stole:  
O weary life that weighest naught, O sleep that on my soul dost weigh!  
O heart, toward they heart's love wend, and O friend, fly toward the Friend,  
Be wakeful, watchman, to the end: drowse seemingly no watchman may.

*R. A. Nicholson - 'Persian Poems', an Anthology of Verse Translations; edited by A.J. Arberry, Everyman's Library, 1972*



## **REMEMBERED MUSIC**

'This said, the pipe and lute that charm our ears  
Derive their melody from rolling spheres;  
But Faith, over passing speculation's bound,  
Can see what sweetens every jangled sound.  
We, who are parts of Adam, heard with him  
The song of angels and of seraphim.  
Out memory, though dull and sad, retains  
Some echo still of those unearthly strains.  
Oh, music is the meat of all who love,  
Music uplifts the soul to realms above.  
The ashes glow, the latent fires increase:  
We listen and are fed with joy and peace.

*R. A. Nicholson - 'Persian Poems', an Anthology of Verse Translations; edited by A.J. Arberry, Everyman's Library, 1972*



## **THE SPIRIT OF THE SAINTS**

There is a Water that flows down from Heaven  
To cleanse the world of sin by grace Divine.  
At last, its whole stock spent, its virtue gone.  
Dark with pollution not its own, it speeds  
Back to the Fountain of all purities;  
Whence, freshly bathed, earthward it sweeps again,  
Trailing a robe of glory bright and pure.  
This Water is the Spirit of the Saints,  
Which ever sheds, until itself is beggared,



God's balm on the sick soul; and then returns  
To Him who made the purest light of Heaven.

*R. A. Nicholson - 'Persian Poems', an Anthology of Verse Translations; edited by A.J. Arberry,  
Everyman's Library, 1972*



## **THE TRUE SUFI**

What makes the Sufi? Purity of heart;  
Not the patched mantle and the lust perverse  
Of those vile earth-bound men who steal his name.  
He in all dregs discerns the essence pure:  
In hardship ease, in tribulation joy.  
The phantom sentries, who with batons drawn  
Guard Beauty's place-gate and curtained bower,  
Give way before him, unafraid he passes,  
And showing the King's arrow, enters in.

*R. A. Nicholson - 'Persian Poems', an Anthology of Verse Translations; edited by A.J. Arberry,  
Everyman's Library, 1972*



## **THE UNSEEN POWER**

We are the flute, our music is all Thine;  
We are the mountains echoing only Thee;  
And movest to defeat or victory;  
Lions emblazoned high on flags unfurled-  
They wind invisible sweeps us through the world.

*R. A. Nicholson - 'Persian Poems', an Anthology of Verse Translations; edited by A.J. Arberry,  
Everyman's Library, 1972*



## THE PROGRESS OF MAN

First he appeared in the realm inanimate;  
Thence came into the world of plants and lived  
The plant-life many a year, nor called to mind  
What he had been; then took the onward way  
To animal existence, and once more  
Remembers naught of what life vegetive,  
Save when he feels himself moved with desire  
Towards it in the season of sweet flowers,  
As babes that seek the breast and know not why.  
Again the wise Creator whom thou knowest  
Uplifted him from animality  
To Man's estate; and so from realm to realm  
Advancing, he became intelligent,  
Cunning and keen of wit, as he is now.  
No memory of his past abides with him,  
And from his present soul he shall be changes.  
Though he is fallen asleep, God will not leave him  
In this forgetfulness. Awakened, he  
Will laugh to think what troublous dreams he had.  
And wonder how his happy state of being  
He could forget, and not perceive that all  
Those pains and sorrows were the effect of sleep  
And guile and vain illusion. So this world  
Seems lasting, though 'tis but the sleepers' dream;  
Who, when the appointed Day shall dawn, escapes  
From dark imaginings that haunted him,  
And turns with laughter on his phantom grief's  
When he beholds his everlasting home.

*R. A. Nicholson - 'Persian Poems', an Anthology of Verse Translations; edited by A.J. Arberry, Everyman's Library, 1972*



## REALITY AND APPEARANCE

'This light makes colour visible: at night  
Red, green, and russet vanish from thy sight.  
So to thee light by darkness is made known:  
Since God hat none, He, seeing all, denies  
Himself eternally to mortal eyes.  
From the dark jungle as a tiger bright,  
Form from the viewless Spirit leaps to light.

*R. A. Nicholson - 'Persian Poems', an Anthology of Verse Translations; edited by A.J. Arberry,  
Everyman's Library, 1972*



## DESCENT

I made a far journey  
Earth's fair cities to view,  
but like to love's city  
City none I knew  
At the first I knew not  
That city's worth,  
And turned in my folly  
A wanderer on earth.  
From so sweet a country  
I must needs pass,  
And like to cattle  
Grazed on every grass.  
As Moses' people  
I would liefer eat  
Garlic, than manna  
And celestial meat.  
What voice in this world  
to my ear has come

Save the voice of love  
Was a tapped drum.  
Yet for that drum-tap  
From the world of All  
Into this perishing  
Land I did fall.  
That world a lone spirit  
Inhabiting.  
Like a snake I crept  
Without foot or wing.  
The wine that was laughter  
And grace to sip  
Like a rose I tasted  
Without throat or lip.  
'Spirit, go a journey,'  
Love's voice said:  
'Lo, a home of travail  
I have made.'  
Much, much I cried:  
'I will not go';  
Yea, and rent my raiment  
And made great woe.  
Even as now I shrink  
To be gone from here,  
Even so thence  
To part I did fear.  
'Spirit, go thy way,'  
Love called again,  
'And I shall be ever nigh thee  
As they neck's vein.'  
Much did love enchant me  
And made much guile;  
Love's guile and enchantment  
Capture me the while.  
In ignorance and folly  
When my wings I spread,

From palace unto prison  
I was swiftly sped.  
Now I would tell  
How thither thou mayst come;  
But ah, my pen is broke  
And I am dumb.

*A.J. Arberry: 'Persian Poems', an Anthology of Verse Translations, edited by A.J. Arberry, Everyman's Library, 1972*



## **I Am Part Of The Load**

I am part of the load  
Not rightly balanced  
I drop off in the grass,  
like the old Cave-sleepers, to browse  
wherever I fall.  
For hundreds of thousands of years I have been dust-grains  
floating and flying in the will of the air,  
often forgetting ever being  
in that state, but in sleep  
I migrate back. I spring loose  
from the four-branched, time -and-space cross,  
this waiting room.  
I walk into a huge pasture  
I nurse the milk of millennia  
Everyone does this in different ways.  
Knowing that conscious decisions  
and personal memory  
are much too small a place to live,  
every human being streams at night  
into the loving nowhere, or during the day,  
in some absorbing work.

*(Mathnawi, VI 216-227) - Rumi, 'We Are Three'*





# Wedding Poems

## **May the blessings which flow in all weddings**

May the blessings which flow in all weddings  
be gathered, God, together in our wedding!  
The blessings of the Night of Power,  
    the month of fasting  
    the festival to break the fast  
the blessings of the meeting of Adam and Eve  
the blessings of the meeting of Joseph and Jacob  
the blessings of gazing on the paradise of all abodes  
and yet another blessing which cannot be put in words:  
    the fruitful scattering of joy  
    of the children of the *Shayak*  
    and our eldest!

\*

In companionship and happiness  
    may you be like milk and honey  
in union and fidelity,  
    just like sugar and halva.  
May the blessings of those who toast  
    and the one who pours the wine  
anoint the ones who said Amen and  
    the one who said the prayer.

*Translation by Franklin D. Lewis „Rumi - Past and Present, East and West“ One World Publications, Oxford, 2000*



## **This Marriage**

*(Ode 2667)*

May these vows and this marriage be blessed.



May it be sweet milk,  
this marriage, like wine and halvah.  
May this marriage offer fruit and shade  
like the date palm.  
May this marriage be full of laughter,  
our every day a day in paradise.  
May this marriage be a sign of compassion,  
a seal of happiness here and hereafter.  
May this marriage have a fair face and a good name,  
an omen as welcome  
as the moon in a clear blue sky.  
I am out of words to describe  
how spirit mingles in this marriage.

*Kabir Helminski „Love is a Stranger“ - Kulliyat-i-Shams 2667 - Threshold Books, 1993*



### **May these nuptials be blessed for us**

May these nuptials be blessed for us, may this marriage be blessed for us,  
May it be ever like milk and sugar, this marriage like wine and halvah.  
May this marriage be blessed with leaves and fruits like the date tree;  
May this marriage be laughing forever, today, tomorrow, like the hour is of  
paradise.  
May this marriage be the sign of compassion and the approval of happiness  
here and hereafter;  
May this marriage be fair of fame, fair of face and fair of omen as the moon  
in the azure sky.  
I have fallen silent for words cannot describe how the spirit has mingled  
with this marriage.

*Translation by A.J. Arberry „Mystical Poems of Rumi 2“; The University of Chicago Press, 1991*



## **Our feast, our wedding**

Our feast, our wedding  
Will be auspicious to the world.  
God fit the feast and wedding  
To our length like a proper garment.  
Venus and the moon  
Will be matched to each other,  
The parrot with sugar.  
The most beautifully-faced Beloved  
Makes a different kind of wedding every night.  
With the favour of our Sultan's prosperity,  
Hearts become spacious  
And men pair up with each other.  
Troubles and anxieties are all gone.  
Here tonight, You go again  
To the wedding and feasting.  
O beauty who adorned our city,  
You will be groom to the beauties.  
How nicely You walk in our neighbourhood,  
Coming to us so beautifully.  
O our river, O One  
Who is searching for us,  
How nicely You flow in our stream.  
How nicely You flow with our desires,  
Unfastening the binding of our feet.  
You make us walk so nicely, holding our hand,  
O Joseph of our world.  
Cruelty suits You well.  
It's a mistake for us to expect Your loyalty.  
Step as You wish on our bloody Soul.  
O Soul of my Soul, pull our Souls  
To our Beloved's temple.  
Take this piece of bone.  
Give it as a gift to our *Huma*\*.  
O wise ones, give thanks

To our Sultan's kindness, who adds Souls to Soul,  
Keep dancing, O considerate ones.  
Keep whirling and dancing.  
At the wedding night of rose and *Nasrin*\*  
I hang the drum on my neck.  
Tonight, the tambourine and small drum  
Will become our clothes.  
Be silent! Venus becomes the Cupbearer tonight  
And offers glasses to our sweetheart,  
Whose skin is fair and rosy,  
Who takes a glass and drinks.  
For the sake of God, because of our praying,  
Now Sufis become exuberant  
At the assembly of God's Absence.  
They put the belt of zeal on their waists  
And start *Sama*'\*.  
One group of people froth like the sea,  
Prostrating like waves.  
The other group battles like swords,  
Drinking the blood of our glasses.  
Be silent! Tonight, the Sultan  
Went to the kitchen.  
He is cooking with joy.  
But a most unusual thing,  
Tonight, the Beloved is cooking our *Halva*\*.

*Ghazal (ode) 31 Divan-i Kebir, Meter 1 - Translated by Nevit Oguz Ergin - Current Walla Walla, WA, U.S.A*

--

\* **Huma**: legendary bird which eats bone. The person on whom she casts her shadow becomes a Sultan. Also called stately bird.

\* **Nasrin**: A variety of rose.

\* **Sama'**: Ritual of the Whirling Dervishes.

\* **Halva**: Sweetmeats.



## **A Marriage at Daybreak**

Do you know, brother, that you are a prince?  
A son of Adam. And that the witch of Kabul,  
who holds you with her colour and her perfume,  
is the world?  
Say the words, I take refuge  
with the Lord of the Daybreak.  
Avoid the hot breathing that keeps you tied  
to her. She breathes on knots and no one  
can un-knot them. That's why the prophets came.  
Look for those whose breath is cool.  
When they breathe on knots, they loosen.  
The old woman of the world has had you  
in her net for sixty years. Her breathing  
is the breathing of God's anger. But God's mercy  
has more strength. Mercy is prior to wrath.  
You must marry your soul.  
That wedding is the way.  
Union with the world is sickness.  
But it's hard to be separated from these forms!  
You don't have enough patience to give this up?  
But how do you have enough patience  
to do without God?  
You can't quit drinking the earth's dark drink?  
But how can you not drink from this other fountain?  
You get restless, you say, when you don't sip  
the world's fermentation. But if for one second  
you saw the beauty of the clear water of God,  
you'd think this other was embalming fluid.  
Nearness to the Beloved is the splendour  
of your life. Marry the Beloved.  
Let the thorn of the ego slide from your foot.  
What a relief to be empty!  
Then God can live your life.  
When you stay tied to mind and desire, you stumble

in the mud like a nearsighted donkey.  
Keep smelling Joseph's shirt.  
Don't be satisfied with borrowed light.  
Let your brow and your face illuminate with union.

*(IV, 3189-3240) - Rumi: One-Handed Basket Weaving - Coleman Barks, Maypop, 1991*



## **Wedding Night**

The day I've died, my pall is moving on -  
But do not think my heart is still on earth!  
Don't weep and pity me: „Oh woe, how awful!“  
You fall in devil's snare - woe, that is awful!  
Don't cry „Woe, parted!“ at my burial -  
For me this is the time of joyful meeting!  
Don't say „Farewell!“ when I'm put in the grave -  
A Curtin is it for eternal bliss.  
You saw „descending“ - now look at the rising!  
Is setting dangerous for sun and moon?  
To you it looks like setting, but it's rising;  
The coffin seems a jail, yet it means freedom.  
Which seed fell in the earth that did not grow there?  
Why do you doubt the fate of human seed?  
What bucket came not filled from out the cistern?  
Why should the Yusaf „Soul“ then fear this well?  
Close here your mouth and open it on that side.  
So that your hymns may sound in Where-no-place!

*Annemarie Schimmel „Look! This is Love - Poems of Rumi“; Shambhala, 1991*



## **Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi (1207-1273)**



*Mawlānā Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī* (= Persian) / (Turkish =) *Mevlânâ Celâleddin Mehmed Rumi*, (1207-1273 CE), also known as *Muhammad Balkhī* (Persian), but known to the world simply as „**Rumi**“, was a 13th century Persian poet, jurist, theologian and teacher of Sufism.

Rumi was born in Balkh (then a city of the Greater Khorasan province of Persia, now part of Afghanistan) and died in Konya (in present-day Turkey). His birthplace and native tongue indicate a Persian heritage. He also wrote his poetry in Persian and his works are widely read in Iran and Afghanistan where the language is spoken. He lived most of his life and produced his works under the Seljuk Empire and his descendants today are Turkish citizens and live in modern day Turkey.

Rumi's importance transcends national and ethnic borders. He has had a significant influence on both Turkish and Persian literature throughout the centuries. His poems have been translated into many of the world's languages and have appeared in various formats. He was also the founder of the Mevlevi order, better known as the „**Whirling Dervishes**“, who believe in performing their worship in the form of dance and music ceremony called the sema.

The general theme of his thoughts, like that of the other mystic and Sufi poets of the Persian literature, is essentially about the concept of Tawheed

(unity) and union with his beloved (the primal root) from which / whom he has been cut and fallen aloof, and his longing and desire for re-unity.

In **Divan-i Shams**, Rumi says:

*What is to be done, O Muslims? for I do not recognize myself.  
I am neither Christian, nor Jew, nor Magian, nor Muslim.  
I am not of the East, nor of the West, nor of the land, nor of the sea;  
I am not of Nature's mint, nor of the circling heaven.  
I am not of earth, nor of water, nor of air, nor of fire;  
I am not of the empyrean, nor of the dust, nor of existence, nor of entity.  
I am not of India, nor of China, nor of Bulgaria, nor of Saqsin  
I am not of the kingdom of 'Iraqian, nor of the country of Khorasan  
I am not of the this world, nor of the next, nor of Paradise, nor of Hell  
I am not of Adam, nor of Eve, nor of Eden and Rizwan.  
My place is the Placeless, my trace is the Traceless...*

Rumi's order issues invitation to people of all backgrounds:

*Come, come, whoever you are.  
Wanderer, idolater, worshipper of fire,  
Come even though you have broken your vows a thousand times,  
Come, and come yet again.  
Ours is not a caravan of despair.*

Rumi's love and his bereavement for the death of Shams found their expression in an outpouring of music, dance and lyric poems, Divani Shamsi Tabrizi. He himself went out searching for Shams and journeyed again to Damascus. There, he realized:

*Why should I seek? I am the same as  
He. His essence speaks through me.  
I have been looking for myself!*

In December 1273, Rumi fell ill. He predicted his own death and composed the well-known ghazal, which begins with the verse:

*How doest thou know  
what sort of king I have  
within me as companion?  
Do not cast thy glance  
upon my golden face,  
for I have iron legs.*

He died on December 17, 1273 in Konya; Rumi was laid to rest beside his father, and a splendid shrine, the **Yeşil Türbe** „**Green Tomb**“, was erected

over his tomb.

His epitaph reads:

*„When we are dead,  
seek not our tomb in the earth,  
but find it in the hearts of men.“*

Rumi's life is fully described in Shams-ud-din Ahmed Aflakis *Manakib-ul-Arifin* (written between 1318 and 1353). He claimed descent from the caliph Abu Bakr, and from the Khwarizm-Shah Sultan Ala-ud-Din b. Tukush (1199–1220), whose only daughter, Malika-i-Jahan, had been married to Jalal-ud-din's grandfather.

## **Work**

Rumi's poetry is often divided into various categories: the quatrains (*rubaiyat*) and odes (*ghazals*) of the *Divan*, the six books of the *Mathnawi*, the discourses, the letters, and the almost unknown Six Sermons. Rumi's major work is *Masnavi-ye Manavi* (Spiritual Couplets), a six-volume poem regarded by many Sufis as second in importance only to the Qur'an.

\* **Fih Ma Fih** (*In It What's in It*) is composed of Rumi's speeches on different subjects. Rumi himself did not prepare or write these discourses. They were recorded by his son Sultan Valad or some other disciple of Rumi and put together as a book. The title may mean, „What's in the *Mathnawi* is in this too.“ Some of the discourses are addressed to Muin al-Din Parvane. Some portions of it are commentary on *Masnavi*.

\* **Majalis-i Sab'a** (*seven sessions*) contains seven sermons (as the name implies) given in seven different assemblies. As Aflaki relates, after Sham-i Tabrizi, Rumi gave sermons at the request of notables, especially Salah al-Din Zargubi.

## **The Mevlevi Sufi**

The Mevlevi Sufi order was founded in 1273 by Rumi's followers after his death. His first successor in the rectorship of the order was Husam Chelebi himself, after whose death in 1284 Rumi's younger and only surviving son, Sultan Walad, favorably known as author of the mystical *Mathnawi Rabbnma*, or the *Book of the Guitar* (died 1312), was installed as grand



master of the order. The leadership of the order has been kept in Jalaluddin's family in Iconium uninterruptedly for the last six hundred years.

